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| INFO | LOG-00  | NP-00   | AID-00  | AMAD-00 | CIAE-00 | INL-00  | USNW-00 |
|      | DODE-00 | PERC-00 | DS-00   | EB-00   | EUR-00  | FBIE-00 | VC-00   |
|      | H-00    | TEDE-00 | INR-00  | IO-00   | LAB-01  | L-00    | CAC-00  |
|      | VCE-00  | NEA-00  | DCP-00  | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OIC-00  | NIMA-00 |
|      | PA-00   | GIWI-00 | PRS-00  | P-00    | CFPP-00 | FMPG-00 | SP-00   |
|      | SSO-00  | SS-00   | STR-00  | TRSE-00 | SCRS-00 | DSCC-00 | PRM-00  |
|      | DRL-00  | G-00    | NFAT-00 | SAS-00  | /001W   |         |         |

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
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INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
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AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USLO TRIPOLI  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 000262

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR D, P, DRL, INR, AF, AF/C, AF/SPG, PRM,  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/19/2014  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [KAWC](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: SEVENTH JOINT COMMISSION MEETING: PROCESS INCHING  
AHEAD

REF: NDJAMENA 261

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reaso  
ns 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: President Idriss Deby and African Union Commission President Alpha Konare opened the well-attended seventh Joint Commission on the Darfur Humanitarian Ceasefire (JC) on February 16. Despite an announced "boycott" of the meeting by leaders of the rebel movements, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) were ably represented. The movements negotiated a delinking of the JC from the N'Djamena Summit on Darfur and obtained the commitment of the GOS to withdraw from two key areas within two weeks. The African Union's Ceasefire Commission Chairman criticized the GOS's disarmament plan because it did not target the jandjaweed. The ambiguous concept of a team to verify the locations of the parties surprisingly won support, for now. The JC ended on a positive note in sharp contrast to the previous two meetings, where either side walked out or disputed the Chairman's conclusions. Finally, SLM/A leader Mini Minawi will be meeting with President Deby in Chad in approximately two weeks. End Summary.

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PARTICIPANTS  
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[¶](#)2. (U) Held on the heels of the N'Djamena Summit (reftel) and billed as a high-level meeting, most delegations had enhanced representation. President Idriss Deby and African Union Commission President Alpha Konare attended the opening session on February 16. The meeting was chaired by JC President Mahamat Ali. Ambassador Sam Ibok headed the African Union delegation. The Secretary General's Special Representative Jan Pronk led the United Nations group. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Tidjani spoke for the GOS. The U.S. delegation consisted of Ambassador Wall, Ambassador John Yates (retired), and P/E officer.

[¶](#)3. (C) Adam Shogar and Jamal Abdulrhman-Arbab (SLM/A) and Mohammed Saleh (JEM) broke ranks with the Asmara-based leadership's boycott of the meeting. On February 12 and 13, P/E officer received several calls from JEM's JC representatives Ahmed Lissan Tugod from Asmara and Talgedin Niam from Dubai saying that the movements would not attend the JC because they were not adequately consulted prior about the meeting, its agenda, and its relationship to the summit. Moreover, Tugod and Niam both said there was a plan afoot to include the National Movement for Democracy and Reform (NMRD) in the meeting. (Comment: They were correct; National Security Agency chief Chaibo and Minister for Public Security Abderahman Moussa invited the NMRD, according to NMRD leader Norain Minawi. JC President Ali and President Deby's half-brother Daoussa Deby ousted the NMRD from the room. End Comment.) Shogar and Saleh were convinced to participate by arguments that the movements cannot gain anything by boycotting; the only way to obtain their goals is to make

demands from within the process, not from outside.

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DEBY'S REMARKS  
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14. (C) On February 16, President Idriss Deby urged the Sudanese parties to respect their commitments. He stated that nine months after the signing of the ceasefire, the situation on the ground was worse in Darfur. He welcomed Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir's pledges made during the heads of state meeting. (Comment: These commitments were never publicly disclosed before the JC. End Comment.) He also urged the rebel movements to respect the ceasefire. He noted that the time had come to know the exact locations of the parties to devise a separation plan for the various forces and a disarmament plan for the jandjaweed. As a result, the President of the Joint Commission would be sending of a verification mission to Darfur soon, Deby said.

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CEASEFIRE COMMISSION REPORT  
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15. (C) African Union Ceasefire Commission Chairman (CFC) MG Festus Okonkwo described an escalation of ceasefire violations, primarily by the Government of Sudan and jandjaweed, over the past month. He attributed the upsurge in militia attacks on civilians as attention-getting behavior as well as the result of uncertainty over the inconclusive peace talks in Abuja. Many incidents involved armed groups that are not party to the ceasefire, but a major source of the attacks were the jandjaweed with GOS support. In addition, Okonkwo lamented the five unprovoked attacks on the AU Mission to Sudan (AMIS), which he described as deliberate attempts to truncate AU operations. Okonkwo said the GOS's attempt to prevent SLM/A and JEM members returning from Abuja peace talks from flying through El-Fasher Airport on January 10 as an action that will hamper future peace talks if not resolved.

16. (C) Okonkwo described the AU takeover of Labado from the GOS and the CFC patrolling of major highways as major achievements. Okonkwo confirmed that the GOS gave the CFC the location of their forces, but that the rebel movements have given AMIS a number of conditions. These include the suspension of GOS aerial reconnaissance and bombardment, guarantees that the GOS will not use jandjaweed to attack their positions, the declaration of a no-fly zone in Darfur, a clear plan to disarm the jandjaweed, patrols of major roads by the CFC, the provision of jandjaweed positions, and the identification of SLA's own positions at the beginning of the mission. (Comment: Okonkwo privately expressed surprise at the SLA's request. End Comment.)

17. (U) As of January 10, 2005, the AU Mission in Sudan is made up 1853 personnel, including 378 military observers, 1403 protection force members, 20 Ceasefire Commission Members and International Support Staff, and 52 civilian police officers.

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DISARMAMENT PLAN FOUND LACKING  
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18. (C) Okonkwo welcomed the Government of Sudan's (GOS) disarmament plan for the jandjaweed, but questioned its workability, the GOS's seriousness, and recommended that it be rewritten. Okonkwo's key criticism was that the plan does not disarm the jandjaweed. The GOS plan outlined four groups to be disarmed: armed tribal militias, armed robbery gangs, rebel groups, and ribat groups. The jandjaweed were categorized under the armed robbery groups and described them as individuals from different tribes, both Arab and non-Arab. Okonkwo said that this categorization was a "deliberate deviation" from the specified target group in all of the signed agreements, the jandjaweed. The GOS plans to disarm the armed robbery gangs by erecting road barriers on all roads. Okonkwo said that this should not be part of a disarmament plan and should be handled by the police. Okonkwo also pointed out that disarming the rebel groups is not the GOS's responsibility. The plan for the tribal militias is to take a census of their weapons and the tribes will commit to use these weapons only in self-defense, which Okonkwo also criticized.

19. (C) In addition to not addressing the jandjaweed, Okonkwo said the plan lacked elements of a public information or civic education program, did not outline procedures for disarmament, such as the timing, methodology, disposal of the weapons; did not include procedures for verification and monitoring of the process or expertise and technical requirements, failed to address broader weapons management issues, and lacked an incentive package.

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KEY ISSUES AND OUTCOMES  
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¶10. (C) The withdrawal of GOS forces from pre-December 8 positions and the delinking of any of the JC's conclusions from the previous day's N'Djamena Summit on Darfur dominated the 12-hour discussion. At one point, after receiving the draft text of the conclusions of the meeting with instructions from JC President Ali to accept it on a take-it-leave-it basis, the representatives of the movements threatened to leave the meeting without an agreed document.

Most other delegations encouraged them to present their objections and explore ways to address them in a revised text.

¶11. (C) In the end, two key outcomes were achieved. The first was the GOS's commitment to remove its forces from Marla, Graida, and Ishma within two weeks. The CFC agreed that it would take over those areas. The movements were again called upon to provide their locations to the CFC.

¶12. (C) The second important development was the decision to send a JC team to work with the CFC to verify the locations of the parties. The U.S. delegation raised concerns, which were shared by the AU and MG Okonkwo about the ambiguous verification mission. It will be chaired by JC President Gen. Ali but no details have been shared with the parties or the international partners. While the movements accepted this mission in the meeting, AU Special Representative Sam Ibok said that there will be considerable controversy over the idea once it becomes more concrete.

¶13. (C) The GOS delegation, adeptly-led by Minister of State Tidjani, cleared the way for acceptance of the Chairman's conclusions, which were blocked when the Libyan delegation insisted that a reference from the summit's communique that called on the international community to refrain from deploying non-African troops to Darfur remain in the conclusions. The rebel movements insisted the reference be deleted. Tidjani acquiesced, deferring to the AU, and the reference was dropped.

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NEXT STEPS  
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¶14. (C) The AU is aiming to restart the peace talks in Abuja in mid-March if conditions on the ground permit, according to Ibok. Representatives of SLA/M and JEM remain skeptical and noted that on February 18 that Doma was under attack by jandjaweed and GOS forces.

¶15. (C) On the movement front, SLM/A leader Mini Minawi called P/E officer on February 19 to say that Daoussa Deby was arranging for him to come to Chad and meet with President Deby. (Comment: This is a major development, considering Mini's deep distrust of President Deby and frequent statements that he is afraid to N'Djamena. He asked for U.S. assurances for his safe passage. End Comment.) Mini said that he will be preceded by several groups of field commanders and expects to be in Chad within about two weeks time. He will travel from Libya to N'Djamena by air. Mini also said SLM/A is planning a leadership conference in Darfur after his meeting in Chad. When P/E officer asked him if SLM/A would stand by the JC session's conclusions, he replied that it would, but that he doubted the GOS would.

¶16. (C) The European Union told the international partners that it is willing to support a meeting for the rebel movements to organize themselves and clarify their leadership issues. In addition, the E.U. would like Sudanese Vice-President Taha and SPLM leader John Garang to speak to the movements about the process of negotiating peace and outline for them the key features of the Naiyasha Agreement. SLM/A's Adam Shogar has asked for such a meeting on several occasions. He also said that once each movement has its house in order then the two movements would like to meet together to discuss a merger or at the minimum, a common front. The E.U. proposal met a lukewarm response because the U.N., France, and the AU claimed it would take too much time to organize and delay the restarting of the talks.

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COMMENT  
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¶17. (C) We were pleased that the representatives of the rebel movements agreed to participate in the meeting. Their confidence grew as they were able to amend the agenda to start off with the CFC report. This enabled the meeting to avoid the usual downward spiral of finger-pointing and denials about the situation on the ground. Even the Chad mediation team, while not happy about the delinking of the JC

from the previous day's summit, praised the movement's negotiating skills. Most of the participants left the meeting more hopeful that the JC's tenor and concrete outcomes will give some momentum to the peace process. The GOS's seriousness about its commitments remains the key.

**¶18. (U) Khartoum and Tripoli Minimize Considered.**  
WALL

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